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Interview with Mr. Gary Shansby, CEO & Founder of Partida Tequila Posted by [Alex Neely](#)

With over 50 years developing household names as Shaklee Nutritional Products, Famous Amos Cookies, and Vitamin Water, J. Gary Shansby has become an icon in the marketing industry. As the Chairman and CEO of Partida Tequila, Shansby has officially blended Mexican heritage with the United States' best-selling spirit. Recently, Affluent Page Magazine had the pleasure of sitting down with Mr. Shansby to discuss his unique vision.

- As someone who is seemingly a master of his craft; where did your idea of marketing begin?

I have been interested in consumer spending habits, trends, and marketing since my early years at the University of Washington. At the UW I was fascinated by what appeared to be a non-scientific, practical understanding of why consumers purchase brands. I discovered a great deal in part time jobs working my way through the university, and in my first career position upon graduation, at the Colgate-Palmolive Company.

My career over the past fifty years has focused on launching and building successful, premium consumer brands. I have built more than 100 brands in food, personal care, beverage, household products, and other consumer categories. Some of these brands included Shaklee Nutritional Products, Famous Amos Cookies, Mauna Loa Macadamia Nuts, Terra Chips, Voss Norwegian Water, Glaceau Vitamin Water, and Partida Tequila. While trends have changed, the education and fascination has never evaporated.



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- At what point did you realize your definitive business skills?

I first sensed my skills at Colgate, where I was promoted several times into more senior marketing positions in the eight years employed there. This continued at my second employer, American Home Products (later Wyeth), and then again at Clorox and Booz Allen & Hamilton. When I joined Shaklee Corporation, I quickly ascended to the CEO position, and was able to reposition a tiny vitamin business into a large, multi-national nutritional and personal care business, positioning the brands as among the first “healthy for you” category of significance around the world.

- With success in over 50 companies, what continues to give you motivation?

I am passionate about consumers, understanding their needs, and finding ways to be successful by being different. It is easy to copy others, but to be successful, one has to be innovative and take risks.

- You have saved several companies from the brink of obscurity. How can a man establish comfort in taking risks?

Comfort can only be achieved with laser focus, integrity, practical approaches to opportunities, and confidence in one’s strategy and tactical methods to build brands.

- Taking a look back over a 50 year career in marketing, what would you consider your greatest achievement?

Developing great leaders while building successful brands. It takes team work, and strong leaders need strong lieutenants. Some would say the success of Shaklee, Famous Amos, Vitamin Water, or Partida Tequila. My greatest achievement was pride in the teams that succeeded together.

- In the flooded market of the alcohol industry, how did you ensure a unique product?

I had never entered the spirits category, so I had to learn everything myself from scratch (with nothing and no knowledge). I knew it would take a better product (smoother and consistent), a Mexican heritage positioning, excellent packaging, the support of a distributor network in which I had no prior experience, passion, commitment, and adequate funding. I studied every aspect carefully, listened, learned, and then had the comfort to take the risk entailed, and this led to an entirely new tequila product and method of Marketing, resulting in Partida Tequila.



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- What should a man look for in a premium tequila?

A product that delivers smooth, consistent brand attributes worthy of paying a premium to sip.

- How much of your own personality, would you say goes into the creation of the tequila?

Partida Tequila is my personality, and me personally. I love Mexico, the Mexican people, their culture, and their commitment. I built Partida to be my finest achievement in the sunset of my career, and I personally believe I'm well on my way to achieving my dream.

- You are involved in nearly every aspect of Partida tequila; how do you remember to live in the moment?

Every day, every sunrise, and every sunset presents a new moment to enjoy. I often awaken during the night with a new idea, and I have always kept positive thoughts, and my goals have been achieved.

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